

The Congregationalist

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FREE CHURCHES AND A CONSTITUTION

Rev. J. Edwin Elder, Boise, Idaho

The nature of the constitution is the key question in the proposed union of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

This constitutional issue highlights the essential difference between the two religious bodies supposed to be united by the Basis of Union. The Presbyterian type of church polity, such as that of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, requires a constitution defining and limiting all divisions of the church and allocating the rights and powers of each division. Under a free church polity, such as that of the Congregational Christian Churches, a constitution is not only non-essential but would completely alter and destroy that free church polity.

The Evangelical and Reformed Church is a nationally incorporated body with recognized levels of organization and authority. Over-all and governing all is the General Synod; under which are the regional synods; and below these are the local organizations. The whole structure is a "National Church" with subdivisions governed by it. To avoid confusion there are assigned rights and powers within the general organization, but the final authority is vested in the top body, the General Synod. Rights granted by this supreme authority to the lesser synods and to the local congregations may be altered at will. The national constitution is an over-all, ruling document.

Free churches, such as the Congregational Christian Churches, are not organized after this fashion. There is no ascending scale of authority. There is no single incorporated Church that is made up of many units under a national constitution. Authority to function as a Church is recognized as existing only in the local church. No national constitution is needed to state that obvious fact, and any national, over-all constitution which presumes to "recognize," "provide," or "allocate" power is exercising a prerogative it does not possess and *cannot* possess in Congregationalism.

Servants of the Churches

Congregational Christian boards, servants of the churches, associations, conferences, General Council and other church bodies are not a part of a national governing "Church." They are the servants of the churches. They are channels by which the churches themselves carry on the work of the Kingdom. Through them the churches accomplish tasks they could not do alone. They are supported *by the churches* on a voluntary basis to perform cooperative tasks, and to carry out the will of the churches. Each Board of Missions, or other church body, has its own charter, and each association, conference and the General Council has its own constitution. These instruments set forth the purposes and working plans of each group alone.

These charters and constitutions make no claim to authority over the churches. They assert no equality with the churches. This has been a basic Congregational principle for more than 300 years. Our forefathers were fearful of a constitution and were positive that the free churches must avoid central authority in order to hold sole allegiance to God in Christ as He speaks to the church in its local church meeting and to the conscience of each Christian, personally.

There are other free church fellowships in our country, notably the Baptist and Christian Churches and many smaller groups, numbering in all, almost half of all Protestants in the United States. These bodies share our conviction that constitutions of wider bodies should

be limited to those functions specifically committed to their care by the churches with ultimate authority resting in the churches of which the wider bodies are only agents. The free church principle is an old tradition with them as it is with us. When we stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, we defend and support these freedom-loving peoples, as well as our own principles.

In the light of the unfortunate nature of a national constitutional church, the departure from our scriptural principles, the surrender of our creative free church procedures, and the support of freedom-dedicated fellow Christians involved in our stand for liberty, what should our churches do? Each church must make its own decision. Obviously, we must choose between at least two roads — or possibly three, if choosing to do nothing is considered a choice!

First, *a free church can choose to surrender its free status and to submit to a national constitution; but no one else can make that decision for it.*

Second, *a free church can vote to remain a free church.* It can continue in a free fellowship of churches, following our Congregational beliefs and principles.

"Wait and See" (?)

Some churches have voted to "wait and see." When the constitution is submitted, they plan to decide whether it suits them or not. There is real danger to church freedom involved in this procedure. The Basis of Union asserts that, right now, the Basis of Union is the governing document for the United Church! The General Council executive committee has stated that the *mere cooperation of a church, without a vote*, in the program of the United Church under this Basis of Union and the new constitution, is one way of being taken in as a member of the new denomination. A church that waits to see the constitution may find itself in a legal tangle!

A church which is "waiting to see" the new constitution may be able to maintain its freedom of decision by adopting a *protective resolution*. Such a resolution, voted by the members, declares that no action of the church in supporting the missionary program, paying per capita dues, sending delegates to Associations, Conferences, or any other church body shall be construed as making the church a member of the United Church.

Such a resolution further states that the local church will not recognize any act or action as involving it in membership in the United Church except by its own vote at a church meeting called for the express purpose of taking such a vote. A copy of such a declaration should be attached to *every* delegate's credentials and to *every* contribution made to a board, conference, council, or other agency, which considers itself a part of the United Church. This is a negative way of protecting the Church which, however, avoids *positive* support of the Congregational principles for which we stand.

The *positive* step by which to declare the church's allegiance to the Congregational way is by joining the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. This assures the freedom of the church to make any move it desires later, and it does not interfere with the church's continued affiliation with a local association, or State conference.

(Continued on page 3, column 1)

Our Devotional Column

Rev. Stanley B. Crosland, Beloit, Wisconsin

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil

He shall preserve thy soul — Psalm 121:7

The first line of this couplet from the famous One Hundred and Twenty-First Psalm is an exaggeration. The poet was certainly using poetic license when he wrote, "The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil." The second line corrects the exaggeration of the first.

"He shall preserve thy soul." That is true. God does not preserve us from "all" evil but He does preserve us from evil by preserving our soul. He gives us the strength of soul with which to overcome evil with good. The Twenty-Third Psalm states this truth. "He restoreth my soul" — "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me."

What God does for us is to give us spiritual help. He helps us directly by way of our inner spirits. He does not help us physically except indirectly and by way of our spirit. We are not spared the possibility of pain of body, physical calamity and material loss but God makes us strong of spirit to meet these things when they come. He deals with us as living souls.

God is wise and good. He puts first things first. He knows that unless our minds and hearts, our attitudes and purposes, our desires and ambitions are right there is little he can help us do with the physical side of life. So He always begins within. He knows that if we go to pieces inside He can do little to help us outwardly. What happens *in* us is more important than what happens *to* us. The Psalmist made a wise request of God. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." That is what God does for us and in a sense only God can do that. St. Paul puts it very well. "Though our outward man perish, yet our inward man is renewed day by day."

Jesus placed great importance on our inner selves. It is not what was without but what was within a man that determined his destiny. The real solution to problems lies in the intangible, immaterial, spiritual realm of mental attitudes, moral convictions and religious faith. "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

With the right spirit you can face your problem. Without the right spirit you are the problem.

PRAYER: *We would count our many blessings, O Lord, and know that with Thy help we can be enabled, inspired and guided in the way of Thy commandments, and at last win the crown of life. Amen.*

Free Churches and a Constitution

(Cont. from page 2)

The National Association is a fellowship of free churches for all those who want to remain free until such time as they can determine their final position *by their own action*. A church may withdraw from the National Association at any time it desires. But while it is a member, it can be sure its autonomous freedom is fully respected. Moreover, the National Association provides national and world outlets for the benevolence giving of a church without any strings attached. A church may give to missionary projects of its own selection through the National Association.

Membership in the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches provides the local church with a fellowship of like-minded churches vigorously active in Christian work and witness in the free, creative Congregational Way.

A Word From the Moderator

Professor George V. Bohman

Royal Oak, Michigan

Plan now for the annual meeting, First Church, Detroit, October 21-23

Since my last note to you, letters that cross my desk suggest the tremendously increasing activity in our fellowship. During April, the Commission on Women's Work met, organized, and planned a program for the year. The Commission on Missions is publishing its first formal brochure and will meet again at the end of May in Wauwatosa to consider further missionary projects. On the same dates, Dr. Robert M. Frehse and I have called the first meeting of the Commission on Religious Education for Detroit. Here, too, local plans for the forthcoming annual meeting are taking shape and the Credentials Committee will soon meet to arrange for pre-registration of delegates and observers.

On April 16, I met with a fine group at Lacon, Illinois to discuss the problems of continuing Congregationalism. From the earnest, day-long discussions came the formation of the Illinois Fellowship of Continuing Congregational Christian Churches and a similar but separate women's fellowship for Illinois. These will become strong factors in mobilizing the many, staunch pro-Congregationalists there. I was specially pleased to meet friends from churches in my old home, Bureau County, and to be introduced by my friend of more than a quarter century, Professor Thomas W. Williams, Galesburg, who is the first moderator of the Illinois Fellowship.

It seems to me that our devotion to true Congregationalism requires us to be alert and active, often on more than one front at a time. If we have not already, we must take all necessary defensive precautions to protect the independence of our local churches, associations, and conferences. I like the brief page of suggestions our Executive Secretary Harry W. Johnson has printed for any who ask for them. But, increasingly, I believe it is becoming our primary responsibility to support a positive program of service and church extension for the continuing fellowship of free churches. If, as many think, any constitution which may be offered by the United Church will contain elements of a power structure that will be non-Congregational, we shall need to implement our present fellowship with a great deal of mutual assistance. At the same time, churches will surely wither which do not extend their free Christianity by creating new churches. The challenge to preach the free Christianity of free churches can be met by our joint missionary efforts. We may be involved in complex legal and mechanical problems for some time, but we can be about the Lord's business in a gratifying and constructive program of church extension and missionary effort.

NEWS NOTES

Advancing at Anaheim

The new Anaheim Community Congregational Church, Anaheim, California, sponsored by three nearby Congregational churches and the Commission on Missions and Church Extension of the National Association (see THE CONGREGATIONALIST for April, p. 2), reports progress. A carefully planned program has been worked out by the pastor, Rev. Walter J. Vernon, and a survey of the parish to find workers in all fields is being conducted. Congregations are increasing and a Sunday School organized. A women's group in First Church, Pasadena, has recently made a generous contribution toward this work.

Should the Merger Be Discussed?

Rev. Harry W. Johnson, Boise, Idaho

The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches believes that the church belongs to its members. Therefore, the members should always be consulted before any decision is made which would vitally affect their church.

No Congregational or Christian church has ever been "under" any constitution except the constitution of that church. The plan to have a national constitution for the United Church, and to seek to bring all of our churches under that national constitution, is a departure from Congregational polity, principles and past practices.

Such a radical departure from Congregational principles and practices is forbidden to our churches by court decisions in most states in which our Congregational Christian churches are incorporated. Participation in such a plan of union by any Congregational Christian church may have serious consequences, legal and ecclesiastical.

It is obviously the business of the members of each Congregational Christian church to know about this, and to study all of the possible implications of the plan as it may affect their own church.

The right to have a free and open discussion of these problems among the lay members of each church is obvious. The need for such discussions by the members in the face of the present situation should be equally clear.

In many local situations, the pastor is reluctant to initiate such discussions. Where there is emotional tension over the matter, the pastor naturally does not want to be held responsible. The lay people can initiate plans for such a study as shall deal only with matters of principle, and which carefully avoids personality clashes.

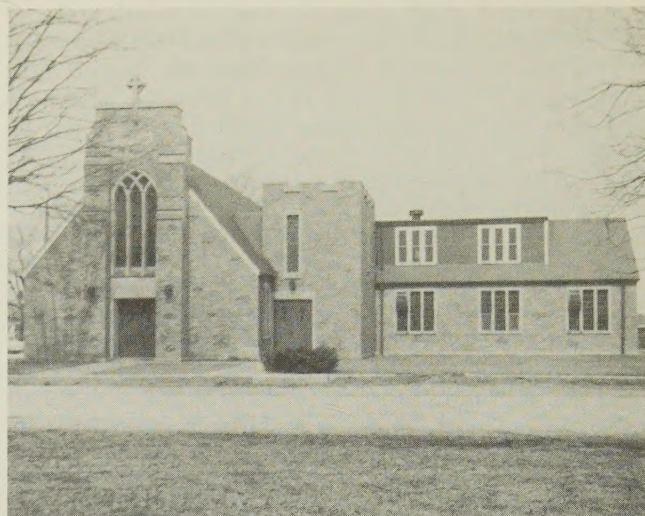
Banded For A Purpose

The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches is a fellowship of churches banded together to strengthen their common purpose to keep their churches free. They are also deeply concerned that other Congregational Christian churches, whose members believe in freedom for local churches, should be alerted to the dangers of inaction by the lay members in the face of the present situation.

We invite and welcome any Congregational Christian church into the fellowship of the National Association when such a church has, by vote of its own members, expressed its desire to join our fellowship. But first, the members of each Congregational Christian church need to study the proposed plan of union, with all of its implications. If such a church has decided, after careful study, that it wants to remain a free Congregational Christian church always making its own decisions, and has also decided that it wants the fellowship of like-minded churches, that church is indeed invited into the National Association.

By voting to join this fellowship, such a church will be giving most effective witness to its faith in the Congregational way for free churches. And such witness may help in reaching still other churches.

LET'S KEEP OUR CHURCHES FREE!



The Congregational Church, Thawville, Illinois (pictured above) was founded in 1860, by a group of the old settlers in what was then known as the "Connecticut Settlement," three or four miles west of the present village. Services were held in the homes of the members. Later, a church building was erected in Thawville. The present building dates from 1941, and the parsonage from 1924. The membership is two hundred. Until his retirement in late 1956, Rev. W. Harvey Young served this church for seven years. Rev. and Mrs. Arthur L. Upton are now serving as Minister and Associate. Thawville Church was a charter member of the National Association.

HOW MUCH ARE WE ALIKE?

An Editorial

A great deal has been said during the merger discussions about the similarities between Congregationalists and the Evangelical and Reformed people. Pulpit exchanges between ministers of the two denominations have been said to demonstrate that we are not very different. Indeed, according to the official version, the union proposals originated when ministers of the two fellowships in the St. Louis area became acquainted and found how much they had in common.

Of course we have a great deal in common! The Editor and his wife once attended an Evangelical and Reformed Church in Pennsylvania, and found the people cordial, the atmosphere friendly. We were made to feel quite "at home." Conversation with the minister after the service was pleasant. One interesting statement came out of it. "What is your understanding?" I asked, "of what the polity of the new Church is going to be?" He replied, "They say that you are to keep your polity and we keep ours, but in an organic union that's not humanly possible."

How right he was! And how well the incident points out the irrelevance of the pulpit exchanges, the friendly visitations, and other such things. We have a great deal in common with people of all Protestant denominations; more indeed than we sometimes realize with Roman Catholics. The issue does not lie here. It lies in polity. The article "Just As Free As We Are (?)" found in this issue, points up the difference in polity. That is the vital thing.

"JUST AS FREE AS WE ARE" (?)

Rev. Angus MacDonald, Toledo, Ohio

On Wednesday, April 23, at 5:30 p.m. I received an urgent telephone call from Rev. William F. Behr, pastor of St. Paul's Evangelical and Reformed Church, Parma, Ohio. Mr. Behr has held several positions of responsibility in his Church, not least of which was that of a member of the local committee making arrangements for the Uniting General Synod at Cleveland. He has actively promoted the merger, and has told Congregational ministers in the area that there is no difference between our churches and his on the matter of local autonomy.

His telephone call was to urge me to attend a meeting that evening at which his congregation was to meet with Dr. Weist, the Synodical President, and with the local Church Council. Some petty dissatisfaction had arisen, in spite of the fact that since Mr. Behr had become their pastor, the church had become self-supporting, membership and attendance had increased, and the church had gained in every way.

Where the Authority Lies

The causes of the dissatisfaction were of the same kind that many a minister meets, mostly a matter of individuals being unhappy because they were displaced in the positions which they had held for many years. The purpose of this article is not to discuss the justice or injustice of the complaints, but rather to point out the dramatic way in which authority was demonstrated to be, not in the local congregation, but in "higher" officials.

Some of the dissatisfied members had appealed to the Synodical President, who was present at the meeting. He, no doubt sincerely, believed that the complaints were serious enough to warrant the dismissal of the pastor. The Church Council went along with the Synodical President, but not so the congregation. This body met and voted to retain the minister.

When I arrived at the April 23 meeting, a large proportion of the congregation was present. There was no question where the majority stood: they wanted to keep Mr. Behr as pastor. But Dr. Weist informed them that their wishes notwithstanding, the minister was out, and had to be out by the end of the month. This meant one more Sunday in the pulpit, and just seven days more of occupancy of the parsonage. The will of the

congregation was not relevant. The latter body was clearly told that in the Evangelical and Reformed Church, every local congregation is subject to the control of the higher judicatory of the Church in matters of calling and dismissing the pastor.

When some members asked about an appeal to the civil courts, they were told that it would probably be of little or no avail. (This is obviously in keeping with the legal principle that the courts will not intervene in church matters unless property rights or civil rights are involved.) On the question of the right of appeal to higher judicatories, Dr. Weist gave the impression that it could be made, but that it, too, would probably be of no avail.

A Decisive Answer

This incident is a decisive answer to the statement so often made as an assurance that Congregational freedom will be preserved in the new constitution. "They're just as free as we are." When it comes to a specific case, the dismissal, on short notice, of Mr. Behr from the pastorate, gives an eloquent denial to this claim.

The story itself has an interesting sequel. Following the meeting with their Synodical President, the congregation considered what it could do. The suggestion that they go into a Congregational church met with the warning that the merger would bring them right back where they were before, — under synodical control. The final alternative suggested was that they leave the present building, start from scratch, and form an independent, congregational-type church. The question of fellowship with other free churches could be handled later. This they voted unanimously to do.

So on Sunday April 27 about a hundred members of St. Paul's Evangelical and Reformed Church, under Mr. Behr's leadership, made that fresh start. With faith in what they were doing, and a new sense of mission, this band of Christians began holding services in a garage. One woman had expressed the situation, "I have been a member of the Evangelical and Reformed Church all my life. I was baptized in this Church. I always thought we could call our own minister, and that we owned our own property, but this meeting tonight shows in black and white form that neither of these beliefs is true."

NEWS NOTES

Midwest Office Opens

The Midwest Field Office of the National Association was opened on June 1 by Rev. Neil H. Swanson Jr., who will become Executive Secretary of the Association in the fall. The temporary address for this office will be c/o First Congregational Church, 1511 Church St., Wauwatosa 13, Wisconsin.

Illinois Fellowship Officers

The May CONGREGATIONALIST reported the meeting held at Lacon, Illinois, on April 16. When we went to press, the only information at hand as to officers elected at that time concerned the Women's Fellowship which was then formed. "The Fellowship of Congregational Christian Churches in Illinois," organized at the same time, elected the following officers: Moderator, Professor Thomas W. Williams of Knox

College, Galesburg; Vice Moderator, Mrs. John Hensel of Edelstein; Secretary, Rev. George E. Millard of Chicago; Treasurer, Mr. Leon Best of Galva. The Executive Committee consists of Messrs. Ted Duffield of Princeton, Palmer D. Edmunds of LaHogue, Gerry D. Scott of Lacon, Ralph D. Spaulding of Oak Park, and Mrs. Sidney V. Holt of Oneida.

Minnesota Lay Group

To the list of organizations "On the Local Level" for the upholding of Congregationalism, given in the April CONGREGATIONALIST, should be added "The Congregational Lay Group of Minnesota," with about 1500 mailing list members and an Executive Committee which meets periodically. The Secretary is Mr. Arthur W. McMillan, 1110 Wesley Temple Building, Minneapolis 3.

WOMEN'S WORK

The first meeting of the Commission on Women's Work was held in Chicago April 23rd and 24th, for earnest, concentrated study and planning, with emphasis on the immediate months ahead. Present were: Mrs. Floyd Collins, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Mrs. E. W. Adams, Marshalltown, Iowa; Mrs. Dale Kelley, Burlington, Iowa; Mrs. George Berkaw, Jr., Detroit, Michigan; Mrs. Alan Jenkins, Royal Oak, Michigan; and Mrs. Paul A. Quaintance, Los Angeles. Absent members were: Mrs. George Mead, West Hartford, Connecticut; Mrs. Herman Ruoff, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania; and Mrs. Raymond Waser, Pomona, California. Present for the two day session as an observer was Mrs. John F. C. Green, McKeesport, Pennsylvania.

The Commission set up definite goals of accomplishment by adopting a purpose, then weighing and measuring each subsequent action on the scales of that purpose as assurance of promoting the ideals and furthering the objectives of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. The purpose as adopted was: "To further the work of the Kingdom of God by uniting women committed to the Continuing Congregational Cause in Christian fellowship through a program of education, spiritual growth, and testimony through stewardship and service."

To Help the Churches

Plans were made for regular contacts with the women's organizations of the member churches. Letters will go regularly during the active church year to the presidents of the women's organizations giving such counsel and encouragement as the need for it is expressed by the women of the churches to the members of the Commission. We encourage communication from the churches to the Commission in order more adequately to interpret the needs of the churches. The next letter will contain a questionnaire requesting urgently needed information that will be used to compile a complete and reliable roster of women's organizations of our member churches and those interested in promoting the Continuing Congregational Cause. A more detailed account of the Commission's meeting will accompany the questionnaire.

In answer to an increasing number of requests a pamphlet of suggestions for Program Planning and Devotional Aids, listing materials and resources is being prepared for June mailing. At the last Annual Meeting, the seminar on Women's Work recommended that the women of the churches have one Missions project in common. The Commission recommends that monies formerly designated "The Women's Gift" be known henceforth as "The Women's Project" and that this year, "The Women's Project" be Church Extension or helping to start new churches.

The check for your gift should be marked "Women's Project," made payable to the Congregational Missionary Society, and forwarded to Dr. Howell D. Davies, Treasurer, Room 2308, 100 North La Salle Street, Chicago 2, Illinois.

The Annual Meeting

Detailed plans were made for the seminar on Women's Work at the National Association Annual Meeting to be held at Detroit in October. A letter giving the program in detail will be mailed in September. We urge you to make plans now to attend that meeting and participate in the discussion and help make the recommendations that will climax our meeting.

Adding to our enthusiasm was the news of the newly

formed Illinois Fellowship of Congregational Christian Churches which includes an organization for women. There was a delegation of seven from that group who met with representatives of the Commission on Women's Work and the Congregational Missionary Society in Chicago on April 22nd to consider plans for promoting Congregationalism in that area.

A second women's fellowship group was called for churches in the Chicago area on April 23rd and we welcomed their representative at our discussion on April 24th. We congratulate both of these groups for having taken such action and for having given witness to their convictions by it. And we thank both groups for having shared their enthusiasm with us and for contributing to our understanding of the problems involved.

William Bradford, you remember, referred to the Mayflower Pilgrims as "sifted seed corn." It looks as though our seed corn is sprouting. Like them, we look forward to a good harvest.

Conscious of the challenge, opportunity and responsibility facing us, the members of the Commission present felt the two days of work and fellowship together very profitably spent.

— Mrs. Alan Jenkins, Royal Oak, Michigan

Congregational Bookshelf

Rev. Royal G. Davis, Los Angeles, California

Vance Packard, a Congregational layman, shouts "I accuse!" against the deliberate manipulation of our thought processes and habits. *The Hidden Persuaders* (Pocket Books, \$.35) is now available at drug stores in a pocket edition. Proud of an independent, non-conformist conscience, our churches should be sensitive to the dangers of the packaged soul, engineered "yes" and organization men. The author concludes, "We still have a strong defense available against such persuaders: we can choose not to be persuaded . . . We still have the choice and we cannot be seriously manipulated if we know what is going on." (p. 228) Church politicians, please note!

General Joshua Chamberlain would be a forgotten hero if John Pullen had not written *The Twentieth Maine*. (Lippincott Co., \$5.00) Civil War enthusiasts will relish the story of this volunteer regiment of Maine farmers and fisherfolk who fought so courageously at Little Round Top and made Gettysburg a national shrine. Congregational Bangor Seminary trained the future general, and Congregational Bowdoin College had him teaching romance languages when war broke out.

New England was built on Congregational principles and the 20th Maine thought an army should be run like a town meeting. A poor way to fight but a tried way to live! The personal bravery and dry humor of the Yankee shine through the volunteer regiment and the Sunday School teacher who led it. We who insist on historic freedoms will be strengthened by the story of those fighting to extend them to others a century ago.

New Member Churches

Recent accessions to the membership of the National Association include the First Congregational Church of Cheyenne, Wyoming, Central Congregational Church of Galesburg, Illinois, and Church of our Saviour, Pacoima, California.

"THEY THAT WERE SCATTERED ABROAD"

Rev. Edward Huntington Smith,
Auburndale, Mass.

(Retired American Board Missionary)

In Luke's story of the Jerusalem persecution in Acts 8 we read, "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." When communism conquered the Chinese mainland, millions of Chinese fled from impending slavery to the islands of Hong Kong, Taiwan (Formosa), Borneo and Java. Among these were educated professional men, government agents, business men and farmers, some of them Christians. When it was learned that the Communists refused to allow lepers, cripples, and blind people to live, thousands of these unfortunates fled. Even to this day we are told that they are still coming out by sampan at night. High and low, rich and poor, they are crowding the cities and islands, living as best they can in camps and on the hillsides. Fifteen years ago the Chinese people at Hong Kong numbered about 500,000, now the refugees have brought it to an estimated 3 million.

Is it surprising that in this persecution, as in Palestine long ago, they that were scattered abroad should go everywhere preaching the word? Since most of the ordained church pastors felt constrained by conscience to remain with their churches in China, the responsibility for spreading the gospel among these refugees fell upon young Christian lay men and women.

The Amazing Response

Amazing has been the response to the preaching of these our mission Christian students as they have gone among the camps. After a few months large churches enrolled a thousand baptized members, churches were built, nightly Bible classes were taught, and Sunday Schools gathered the homeless mobs of children. In Taipei 40,000 children were enrolled in Daily Vocation Bible Schools, with 1800 Chinese Christian volunteer leaders.

In Hong Kong, both on the island proper, on the Kowloon Peninsula, and in Shatin, New Territory, the refugee churches have had three places of assembly. Mr. Livingstone Chiang, director of the work there, reports that because of the burning of the branch assembly at Kowloon-tsai, the people there have worshipped with those at Hong Kong, with the result that they have to have four sessions a Sunday. A typhoon has destroyed the chapel at Shatin, and lack of money has compelled the closing of the work there for the present. "In the meantime," writes Mr. Chiang, "the most urgent problem confronting us is to obtain premises for holding an assembly of 500 to 600, in order that Sunday functions could be grouped together. For this we have been praying all the while."

Street Preaching

The Gospel Band, composed largely of teachers and students of the Berea Bible School, carries on street preaching. "When the passers-by," writes Mr. Chiang, "hear our singing of hymns and the sound of the drum, most of them would like to stop a moment, paying attention to what we do. All members of the Band wear white vests embroidered with golden verses in red. It always draws a great number of people. Wherever we preach there are many touched, and raise their hands to show that they are determining to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour."

These converts are told, "You have by your baptism declared yourself a disciple of Christ Jesus. You must come to the church Bible classes every night

where we will teach you Bible stories and hymns. Your children must be enrolled in the Sunday School."

To supply these crowded camps with chapels and preachers these young evangelists have turned to friends in America, Canada, and England, to train young couples who can man scores of chapels as preaching evangelists and Bible teachers. In many cases a few hundred dollars suffices to build a "bamboo church," in other cases houses are rented and equipped with organs, electric lights, and class rooms for daily use. These churches become the social, educational and spiritual centers for the suffering multitudes. Madame Chiang Kai-Shek has recently said of this spontaneous and indigenous missionary movement, "Do you realize that in the little chapels and your Bible training schools you are preparing a mighty force, a seed bed of Christian evangelists who will carry Christianity throughout Asia?"



The Training Ground

In 1952, in order to train preachers and teachers for this work, Berea Bible Institute was organized at Kowloon, Hong Kong. Thus far financial difficulties have prevented the needed expansion, so that in the last half year of 1957 only fourteen students could be enrolled, all of them are refugees. Only two full time teachers could be maintained. The student hostel, originally upstairs in the church, has been in rented rooms since the disastrous fire. "In order to supply the students' hostel, classrooms, and the expenses of the school," writes Mr. Chiang, "at present we need \$300 a month (U.S.). We do not have any regular fund. Every month we rely on God. There are more than twenty persons willing to study Bible at our Bible School at present, but we don't have enough money, so we can only accept a few of them."

From Hong Kong and Formosa come constant calls for more churches and more preachers. For full time service such a Christian family needs from \$300 to \$500, according to the size of the family. On Taiwan, for work among the aborigines, it is planned to build a large church, costing about \$60,000 of which \$1,000 has been subscribed by the 300 members of the church there. Mr. Chiang's words ring true, "The whole church has been praying for this and trusting that our God shall supply all our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

The leader of this work is Livingstone Chiang, ably assisted by Benjamin Chen. Mr. Chiang, by no means a well man, is carrying on under manifold difficulties, but he is able to say as only a convinced Christian can, "I wish to testify that by the grace and guidance of our Lord I have been able to be a fellow-worker serving the Lord and His children among the refugees in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Such works are indeed glorifying in the extreme though tough and heavy. But the Lord's grace is sufficient for us, and therefore I have the courage and perseverance in pursuing our holy course."

YOUR GIVING IS NEEDED NOW

Already:

The Congregational Christian Churches have ventured in faith to help in the name of Christ the following causes:

Anaheim, California

A new, free Congregational Church, gathered to use a property consisting of one main residence, a guest house, and two other usable buildings, on three acres of land, the gifts of Mrs. George D. Griffith of the Santa Ana Church.

Maetlakatla, Alaska

A strategic mission work at a strategic center, celebrating one hundred years of service at this far northwest outpost.

Churches of South India

A group of churches in another part of the world that share the same longing for a free Congregational fellowship as we do.

Anatolia College, Salonika, Greece

A Christian college, founded by Congregationalists, and giving opportunity for Christian education to four generations of youth of the Near East.

Ahmednagar Theological School, India

An essential institution for the training of native pastors.

Camden, Maine

Aid to provide student assistant.

Piedmont College

Work-learn scholarships for worthy youth of north-eastern Georgia or from any of our churches.

AND

There is immediate need for funds for the establishment of Congregational churches in expanding urban areas in the East, Midwest, and Far West.

To aid established Congregational churches whose program has been affected by population or economic changes, but for the services of which there is still a real need.

For evangelistic work among refugees from Communist China in Formosa and Hong Kong.

For scholarship aid to men preparing for the Congregational ministry who wish to be stimulated by the loyalty of English Congregationalism by study in British seminaries.

WHO MAY GIVE?

Churches: which cherish the freedoms of a Congregational fellowship.

Women's Groups: projects are waiting for funds. We urge especially that funds raised for the "Woman's Gift" be sent.

Pilgrim Fellowships: our youth will wish to know and to give to projects which represent a free fellowship of churches.

Individuals: who want to be sure that their stewardship is in keeping with loyalty to "the liberty that is in Christ."

Each: may give to any special project of his own choosing and for which the gift is designated. If un-

designated, gifts will be used wherever the need is greatest.

REMEMBER! No administrative or promotional expenses are taken out of your missionary dollar — 100 cents of your missionary dollar reaches the person or project for which it is given.

WHY AND HOW

Former agencies of the Congregational Christian Churches have become agencies of a different denomination.

Therefore, the Executive Committee of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches has asked its Commission on Missions and Church Extension to join forces with the Missionary Society of Congregational Christian Churches of the United States (incorporated in and under the laws of the State of Illinois), so that the fellowship of Congregational Christian Churches might continue the great work of missionary enterprise, for which it has been historically noted.

Our proposed budget for this first year is \$20,000.00.

We will need every penny of it to accomplish what, in faith, we have pledged.

We suggest that each church divide its benevolence giving as follows, if possible: 50% to the Missionary Society, Rev. Howell D. Davies, Sec.-Treas., 100 No. LaSalle St., Chicago 2, Ill., 50% to the National Association, Paul R. Biggs, Treas., Barclay Bldg., Oregon City, Ore.

(Pamphlets bearing this information may be obtained from the Executive Secretary or Regional Representatives of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches, or from Rev. Howell D. Davies at the above address.)

EDITOR'S COMMENT: The Commission on Missions and Church Extension of the National Association devotes itself to *information, promotion, and publicity*. The Missionary Society *receives and distributes* missionary funds to designated, or to undesignated, approved objects and persons.

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Subscriptions are invited: \$2.00 a year (11 issues); Sponsoring subscriptions, \$5.00 or more a year. Churches which send the paper to at least seventy-five per cent of their church families may subscribe at \$1.00 a year per copy. For other special arrangements please consult the editor. Remittances to the order of the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches may be sent to the Editor or to the Treasurer of the Association.